

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE OPENS PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FOR
DOGWALKING MANAGEMENT IN THE GGNRA**
Community Invited to Offer Ideas and Suggestions During 60-Day Comment Period

January 10, 2001, SAN FRANCISCO, CA...The National Park Service (NPS) today invited the public to offer its input regarding future pet regulations in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA). The 60-day public comment period, noticed in the Federal Register, relates to the Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR), a process that could ultimately lead to a rulemaking procedure to develop new pet management regulations for the GGNRA.

The NPS is asking the public to give input on a range of potential management options to address appropriate pet regulations within the GGNRA. Current regulations call for dogs to be on leashes in all areas of the national parks where they are allowed, including the GGNRA.

“We’re taking a leadership role by opening up this public process,” explained O’Neill. “As a national park in an urban setting, we are confronted daily with challenges of balancing nearly 17 million visitors and their diverse uses with protection of the natural and cultural resources. We hope the public will take advantage of this opportunity to tell us specifically what kinds of pet management policies they’d like to see in the GGNRA.”

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At the end of this 60 day period, the NPS will analyze public comments and other data to make a recommendation as to whether or not to initiate the rulemaking process. The rulemaking process could lead to alternative pet management regulations specifically for the GGNRA. During the ANPR process and until or unless the regulation is changed, the existing regulations will continue to be enforced.

Copies of the ANPR are available at NPS Visitor Centers, as well as at many public libraries in San Francisco, Marin, San Mateo and Alameda counties. The ANPR can be accessed on the internet: www.nara.gov/fedreg (search for National Park Service) Comments can be made in writing and mailed to: GGNRA, Attention: ANPR, Fort Mason, Building 201, San Francisco, CA 94123, or faxed to (415) 561-4355. Comments will be welcomed at public meetings, to be announced at a later date. For meeting dates and locations, call (415) 561-4728. The public comment period extends 60 days from when the notice is posted in the Federal Register, which was Friday, January 11, 2002. Comments must be received by March 12, 2002.

BACKGROUND

In 1979, the GGNRA's Citizen Advisory Commission recommended a "voice control" policy for certain areas of the park. However, this policy did not and could not override NPS system-wide prohibition of pets off leash. Due to recent events, GGNRA has undertaken a program to educate visitors about Section 2.15 in Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations, the National Park Service-wide regulation which requires that pets be on leash, where allowed, in all NPS sites.

This past March, GGNRA Superintendent Brian O'Neill requested and received National Park Service approval to examine ways to modify the regulations for the GGNRA.

Issues of increased use and visitation, public and pet safety, natural resource impacts, and user conflict are shared by all Bay Area land-management agencies, causing many of them to re-examine their own pet management policies. These agencies include the San Francisco Department of Recreation and Parks, Marin County Open Space District, California Department of Parks and Recreation, East Bay Regional Open Space District, and many other land managing agencies in the Bay Area.